

The Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity Sunday  
St. Luke 10:23-37  
August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024  
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC  
Simpsonville, SC  
St. Michael and All Angels Ev. Lutheran Mission, UAC  
Augusta, GA  
Pastor Jerald Dulas

## Who Is My Neighbor?

*In Nomine Iesu!*

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

### **Sermon Text:**

“But he, desiring to justify himself, said unto Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbor?’”

### **Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:**

O Lord Jesus Christ, our Good Samaritan and only Mediator, Who, seeing us in our guilt and blood, didst have pity upon us, and of Thine infinite mercy didst give Thine innocent blood in payment for our sins that we might live, we humbly thank and praise Thee, that Thou hast saved us from destruction, and by Thy holy Word hast brought us to the saving knowledge of Thee, our only Savior and Redeemer; and we beseech Thee, enable us by Thy Holy Spirit to love Thee, the true God, with our whole heart and our neighbor as ourselves, that we may show mercy on all men in their need, bind up their wounds with tender care, and ever in this evil world follow Thy example of love and service, Who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

My dear friends, the certain lawyer in today’s Gospel reading asks our Lord + Jesus, the Christ, “And who is my neighbor?” When studying the Second Table of the Law (commandments 4-10, which all deal with our responsibility to our neighbor) we also ask ourselves this question, “And who is my neighbor?” Today, our Lord provides the answer. Our neighbor is anyone who needs our compassion; who needs to be shown our mercy. So then, that should raise the question in our minds, “Who needs my compassion?” “Who needs to be shown mercy by me?” The short answer: Everybody. But we also need to define what compassion and mercy are: mercy is not treating somebody the way that they deserve to be treated.

How then do we (and our neighbor) deserve to be treated? The answer is in the parable that our Lord + Jesus preaches to us today. Our Lord states that “a certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho.” This is more than just a geographical description of where this man is at and where he is heading. Our Lord does not say something without there being an intention behind those words. Jerusalem was the holy city, the place of the temple and therefore, the place where God abided in His presence for and among His people, the Jews. That is to say simply that Jerusalem is the place where God abides with His people. Jericho, on the other hand, is the opposite. We remember Jericho from our Old Testament lessons. Jericho was the stronghold of the land of Canaan. The impregnable place that represented all that was horrible about the people of Canaan: their false gods, their corrupt living, their utter disregard for Who God is and what He does for them. To state it simply, Jericho was the place of the faithless, the godless, the sinner.

This man in our Lord's parable has left Jerusalem and is going down to Jericho. One might say that this man represents Adam, who through his disobedience to God left the place where he enjoyed complete fellowship with our Lord and exchanged it for the toil and labor by the sweat of his brow that comes from living in this world corrupted by sin—his sin. And because Adam sinned, all of his children—all of us—no longer enjoy the complete fellowship of our Lord. We too have become corrupt in our thoughts, words, and deeds. The man in the parable we are told “fell among robbers.” These robbers are none other than the devil and his legions, who led Adam into temptation and beat him with the original sin which we continue to bear. We also are continually tormented in this life through the temptations into sin by these “robbers” who rob men of their faith, and turn us to look to our own works and keeping of the Law for our salvation. Even as the lawyer who first approached our Lord sought His redemption through the working and keeping of the Law.

It is interesting to note here that the word which is translated as “beat him” in the Greek is “plagues.” This is what sin is to you and me, it is a plague that infests and kills, and leaves us “half dead.” That is to say, not only can a completely dead person do nothing to bring himself out of death into life, even a half dead person cannot revive himself through the keeping of dead works. For sin completely infests him like a plague.

Our Lord now relates that both a priest and a Levite see the man and “passed by on the other side” of the road. Who do this priest, and this Levite represent? In short, they represent those who show no compassion upon this poor sinner, who is plagued with sin and death. Spiritually, they are the Law of God. The Law shows the poor, miserable sinner no compassion, for it demands perfect obedience; perfect keeping. It demands, as our Lord points out to the lawyer in today's pericope, perfect mercy and compassion for our neighbor, for those in need of being rescued from sin, death and the devil.

How do we show compassion for our neighbor? The Samaritan—a foreigner—shows us what true compassion is. (And mark this well, that in next week's Gospel we will get another Samaritan—a Samaritan leper) The Samaritan (often referred to as the “Good Samaritan”) is our Lord + Jesus, the Christ, Who bandages our wounds—our plagues, our sins—through the proclaiming of forgiveness of our sins through the words of Absolution, which declare that on account of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ, and His perfect keeping of the Law, and His perfect sacrifice of death on the tree of the holy Cross, we have forgiveness, life, and salvation through faith in Him. This what St. Paul writes to the Galatians in today's Epistle, “But the scripture shut up all things under sin, that the promise by faith in + Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.” More than that, our Lord also pours oil and wine on our wounds to heal them. These are references to Holy Baptism and the Holy Supper. For in the ancient Church the Holy Baptism was sealed (confirmed, where we get that term confirmation) by pouring olive oil infused with frankincense and myrrh upon the newly baptized. And the wine is clearly a reference to the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar.

In these two Sacraments the plague of sin is washed away, and we are sustained in that freedom from sin when we gather in this place, and we are given the medicine for our soul—the medicine of our Lord's Body and Blood given in bread and wine for us Christians to eat and drink so that we might enjoy forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and salvation.

Our Lord, in His compassion for us, does not stop with Holy Baptism, Holy Absolution, and the Holy Supper, but He further (as the Good Samaritan) sets us on His own beast—His holy Scriptures and the teachings of the Apostles—and delivers us to the Inn—the Church—where He entrusts us to the Host—the one appointed to continue to bandage and cure us from the plague of sin—His holy Ministers—who continue in the Church, through preaching and the sacraments, to bind up our broken wounds with the promises of the Gospel, speaking into our ears the truth that real redemption is not found in our works or our keeping of the Law, but is found in the works of our Lord and His sacrifice on the holy Cross for us.

Therefore, my dear friends, how do we show mercy to our neighbor? To “everyone”? Well, just as the man who was beaten by robbers was a picture of the Old Adam and by virtue is a picture of all mankind, so too is the Samaritan a picture of the New Adam, and by virtue all those who through faith in the New Adam, desire to live holy lives through the help of the Holy Ghost. That is to say, we show mercy to our neighbor by doing the same things that the Samaritan did for the man lost on the way and outside of the fellowship of our Lord. We show mercy to our neighbor by bringing them to this holy house so that their wounds from sin, death, and devil might be bandaged through Absolution; that they might have their wounds cleansed through the washing and regeneration of the Holy Ghost in the waters of Holy Baptism; that they might receive the medicine for their souls found in our Lord’s Body and Blood given in bread and wine; that they might hear the preaching of the holy Scriptures and the teachings of the Apostles from the lips of the Minister from the pulpit, who through the “two shillings” of the Law and the Gospel keeps proclaiming to them that their works merit them nothing, but our Lord’s works—His work of compassion for us by perfecting fulfilling the Law that we could not, and His suffering and dying in our place on the tree of the holy cross—is the true path to salvation through faith in that promise.

“Who is my neighbor?” is the question which the lawyer asks our Lord + Jesus. Our neighbor is he who needs compassion and mercy, which means, everybody. How do we show compassion and mercy for our neighbor, for everybody? By bringing them to the Inn, that is, the Church; to this holy house to receive the gifts of our Good and True Samaritan, our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. Therefore, my friends, as our Lord said, “Go, and do thou likewise.” Let us show compassion and mercy for our neighbors: our boyfriends, our girlfriends, our spouses, our coworkers, and even those who we do not necessarily like or agree with, and bring them to the Host, so that they might have their wounds bandaged and cured in this holy Inn, so that everyone may receive the salvation that leads them into life everlasting. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

**Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:**

Almighty God, be pleased to accompany Thy Word with Thy Holy Spirit and grant that Thy Word would increase faith in us; bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred; turn the hearts of the unrepentant; and for sake of Thy Name grant succor to all heavy hearts and those who are heavy-laden, that they may through the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ be relieved and preserved so that they succumb not to the temptation of despair but rather that they gain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with the Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

**The Votum:**

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

*Soli Deo Gloria!*